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TURNER-MIDDLE EAST
BY MICHAEL J. SNIFFEN
WASHINGTON (AP) -- FORMER CIA DIRECTOR STANSFIELD TURNER SAID FRIDAY THAT ISRAEL'S HESITATION IN ATTACKING WEST BEIRUT HAS REVEALED A ''NATIONAL WEAKNESS'' SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH LED TO U.S. DEFEAT IN VIETNAM.
IN A SPEECH, TURNER SAID THE REVELATION OF ISRAELI INHIBITIONS IN USING ITS MILITARY POWER IN LEBANON COULD EMBOLDEN THE JEWISH STATE IN ANY FUTURE WAR AGAINST THE ARABS.
''THE CARDINAL LESSON OF THE RECENT EVENTS IN LEBANON IS THAT THEY HAVE DISCLOSED ONE OF ISRAEL'S NATIONAL WEAKNESSES,'' TURNER TOLD THE INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM ASSOCIATION, A PUBLIC-SPEAKING SOCIETY.
''WHEN A COUNTRY HAS SUPERIOR MILITARY FORCE AND YET HESITATES TO EMPLOY IT, AS HAVE THE ISRAELIS IN FRONT OF WEST BEIRUT FOR THE PAST SIX WEEKS, IT INDICATES THAT THERE ARE BASIC INHIBITIONS OR LIMITATIONS ON HOW THEY CAN USE MILITARY FORCE.''
TURNER SAID THE ISRAELIS' INHIBITIONS STEM FROM THREE SOURCES: A RELUCTANCE TO TAKE HEAVY CASUALTIES, INTERNAL DIVISION OVER THE APPROPRIATENESS OF INFLICTING HEAVY CASUALTIES ON ARAB CIVILIANS, AND STRONG PRESSURE FROM THE UNITED STATES AND INTERNATIONAL OPINION.
''WHETHER ISRAEL GOES ON IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS OR WEEKS TO CONQUER WEST BEIRUT OR NOT, WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT IS THAT IT HAS TOLD THE ARABS THAT IN FUTURE WARS, ISRAEL MAY NOT BE ABLE TO EXERCISE ITS FULL MILITARY MIGHT,'' TURNER SAID.''WE AS AMERICANS OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO APPRECIATE THIS. WE HAD OVERWHELMING MILITARY SUPERIORITY AGAINST NORTH VIETNAM BUT WE WERE UNABLE TO USE IT. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE DETECTED THAT, TOOK ADVANTAGE OF IT AND DEFEATED US.''
TURNER ASKED, ''WHAT IF THERE IS ANOTHER ARAB-ISRAELI WAR IN THE NEXT 5 OR 10 OR 15 YEARS? WILL THE ARABS SENSE THAT ISRAEL CANNOT PUSH ITS FULL ADVANTAGE?''
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